11/22/75

Dear Alan,

You will be getting an entirely unsolicited plug for me from Les Whitten, who phoned me about it yesterday a.m. after an experience he had in Atlanta. I have been helping him from time to time, he has come to be familiar with my work and from before I was hospitalized he has been telling me such things about myself and my work as make maiden blush. While I was in the hospital he came and I put him on to what made him a good column. We have become friendly. If you can get what Marchetti said at Vanderbilt also on paper I think these and other things will be helpful in the future. Meanwhile, with my new limitations I'll address and with the expectation of other and new copies I'll delay sending you the press on the new book.

The reaction to our mailing, not the press, is fantastic, greater than we have ever had. My wife and I work full days and into the nights and are not up on the pre-paid orders. The news stories do not tell people how to get the books. I work with my feet propped up, my lap as the work-table, and stack the packages alongside the arm chair until I have a box full.

My movement is more limited. Had I not taken the student to Nashville with me I'd not have been able to make it. However, I can still speak, only under the original restrictions, like the wheelchair. Before I left Nashville I could not walk. I have seen the doctor and have his OK. In fact, I had to go see him from the Washington airport. He said not to worry but to be more careful, that his loosening the restrictions apparently was a bit premature. He says I'm coming along and that the excitement of speaking and confrontation are not a factor. So, if you can book more, go ahead.

On the way I was taken with a chill and fever. They had a nice meal for us (without a single woman student!) but I could eat little. By the time I was back at the motel it was almost impossible to remove the shoe that hadn't even been laced. I had to come back in doeskin moccassins that were too tight! But with this first experience I have learned that the airlines are magnificent. For whatever value it can have to you if you have not had the experience and have another like me let me report it.

When I asked the Braniff ticket booth at the Nashville airport if they could arrange an isle seat on the right side so that when the plane was not taking off and landing I could keep my left leg on my attache case and the clerk took a look at the foot he took over. First he got a wheelchair. I mean like snapping fingers. Then he let nobody on the plane until he consulted the crew. Then he took me alone on, dropping the back entrance so they could help me up it and I'd not have to walk through the whole plane. Meanwhile, the stewardesses, who appear to have a rudimentary knowledge of all medical problems, also put the back of the seat in front of me down so I could keep my legs raised on it. And when I got to Washington they had someone waiting with a wheel-chair my companion used and on which I could sit until he got his vehicle, a van in which he had arrangements from the past for keeping my legs elevated. He took me to the doctor and then home. He also carried everything for me both ways, easing that burden. I'd not have been able to make it the night of the program without this help alone.

We discussed his expenses. I leave it all up to you and what Vanderbilt is willing to do. Neither flight served a meal. My out-of-pocket expenses are between $15 and $20 in all. I was not able to keep records. His ticket, for which I paid, is enclosed. It was not handled well because of my oversight and his inexperience. I gave him a blank check, sent him to a friend in Washington who has a travel agency, and forgot to ask him to get a receipt. When I asked him for the receipt and he didn't have it he told me the total cost was $124.73, which I wrote on the envelope in which your ticket was mailed. I'd given this to him so he'd be sure to get on the same planes. Travel to and from the airport was 120 miles. Parking was $8.00. In addition, he had about 100 miles of driving to get here and then back to his home. Aside from what is normal if Vanderbilt is unwilling to pay these expenses I will absorb them.

Please do not misunderstand what follows. My purpose is to be helpful to you. I do not know who you book on the JFK assassination or other subjects but for an audiencet that wants a pro- Warren Commission speaker you will not find it possible to get one better than Belin. The reason is that the man is psycho. He is utterly irrational on this subject, impervious to reason, nonresponsive as a skilled lawyer can be but more so than any within my experience and with all gives the appearance of unquestionable sincerity. In fact, I am convinced he is that sincere. I have never met anyone on his side as glibly and unembarrassedly capable of answering a question not asked rather than the one asked and making it appear that he has responded.

I wanted very much to have a tape of that meeting. The college station was to have done it but it turned out they did not. In fact, they didn't even let the local papers know of the program. I go into this in the interest of your salesman Doug. I found out by accident when I phoned Pat Welch, an experienced reporter for the Nashville Tennessean who I know from my work on the King/Ray case, which she covered. (That subject now is hot all over again, remember, and I am the only one on the side opposed to the official version, did all the work that got the case back into court and wrote the only non-official book.) She was surprised to know that either Belin or I were there, checked with her desk, got herself assigned to the story, met me at the motel, and I asked the students if she could join us for dinner. They agreed. However, hers was really not the best paper of the two there because it does not come out until the following afternoon. And if they'd had a notice the day of the program or prior to it the audience, which packed the hall as it turned out, could have been greater.

Although this is uncomfortable for me because of the position required, I want to be as helpful to you as I can be. So, I tell you that looking back a decade I can't recallas apathetic a student body as reflected by that audience. My ppint is that this may perhaps guide you in what you have the best chance of selling.

A Philadelphia reporter has taped an agreement with Arlen Specter to debate me there. I said this had to be arranged through you. I hope it goes through but I'll be surprised is Specter accepts. He is not psycho as Belin is.

Meanwhile, I do hope you can complete the arrangements for the Binghampton program with Belin. I learned much about him this time and look forward to another joint appearance. In an effort to be fair to him I prepared a speech. It was much for me under the existing conditions. I didn't even have time to read it until I was on the plane. Next time it will be ad lib except for notes referring to the visuals that have now been made for me from the new book- entirely new visuals.

Thanks and best regards,